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ABSTRACT

The major developmental challenge for children is not simply to create a unified text world but to move among multiple worlds, carrying out multiple roles and coordinating multiple space/time structures. A study observed eight primary-grade students over a 2-year period and focused on the interrelationships between children's creation of written text worlds and their use of or response to forces outside those worlds but within the situation context of the classroom. The children, from a language arts class, were first observed and then descriptive data, audiotapes of the children's talk, photocopies of their drawn and written products, and notes on observed behaviors, was compiled. Findings showed (1) the observed children's text worlds were, as a group, gradually less governed by drawing and any accompanying talk: the group moved from a tendency to comment on pictures, to a tendency to observe scenes, and finally to act within dynamic worlds; and (2) their composing behaviors suggested that their use of writing became progressively more involved with their ongoing social and their wider experienced worlds: the children specifically shared and discussed their written messages and the relationship of those messages to the wider world rather than only to their pictures. (Five tables of data and 17 writing examples are included, and 52 references are appended.) (MS)

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CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF WRITING

Technical Report No. 15

NEGOTIATING AMONG MULTIPLE WORLDS
The Space/Time Dimensions Of Young Children's Composing

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NEGOTIATING AMONG MULTIPLE WORLDS: THE SPACE/TIME DIMENSIONS OF YOUNG CHILDREN'S COMPOSING

by

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Writing Example 1

Once there was a cowboy. I hated the cowboy a lot. Do You LIke cowboy's? but I like YOu alot. Sometimes I LIke The cowboy. TueSdaYs I LiKe The cowboy. The End. [text accompanying a drawing of a cowboy]

Writing Example 2

Once there was a girl. I like the girl. I Hate the Girls Brother a Lot. The End [text accompanying a drawing of a crying little boy and a frowning girl]

These products, by 6-year-old Mitzi, illustrate what is often described as the "primitive collections of random ideas" produced by young children (Perera, 1984, p. 217). Here are not the unified text worlds of the adult writer, worlds whose space/time structures are unified through linguistic markers of tense and person (Bruner, 1986). Rather, Mitzi appears to be moving among worlds, from an imaginary, observed past to a conversational, involving present, influenced perhaps by the pictorial world (the drawn cowboy) and her memories of the daily world she shared with her baby brother (whom she loved, "but not always").

Most studies of young writers like Mitzi have not explored the sense of children's unstable worlds, except to label them as such. Rather, they have documented the increasingly unified and coherent nature of children's text worlds--the texts' "disembeddedness" or freedom from outside symbolic or social ties (Donaldson, 1978; Olson, 1977). Thus, the developmental questions about young children's writing have revolved around how children's text-producing processes change (Graves, 1983), how their narratives or non-narratives are structured over time, and how comfortable children are in story or expository frames, or poised conversationally and "expressively" between the two (King & Rentel, 1981; Newkirk, 1987).

In the project reported in this article, I adopted a different, although not incompatible, perspective. I followed Mitzi and seven of her primary-grade peers over a two-year period, observing them as they composed imaginary worlds. I focused on the interrelationships between children's creation of written *text worlds* and their use of or response to forces outside those worlds but within the situational context of the classroom--particularly *other symbolic media* (drawing and talk) and *other people* (particularly peers). Rather than focusing on how the children's written messages

became disembedded, I examined how their use of writing was embedded within a network of supportive symbolic and social relationships.

On the basis of the project's findings, I argue here that children's major developmental challenge is not simply to create a unified text world but to move among multiple worlds, carrying out multiple roles and coordinating multiple space/time structures. That is, to grow as writers of imaginary worlds--and, by inference, other sorts of text worlds as well--children must differentiate, and work to resolve the tensions among, the varied symbolic and social worlds within which they write, worlds with differing dimensions of time and space. And it is our own differentiation of these competing worlds that will allow us as adults to understand the seemingly unstable worlds--the shifts of time frames and points of view--that children create.

THE THEORETICAL FRAME: LEARNING TO NEGOTIATE AMONG MULTIPLE WORLDS

Surface appearances to the contrary, there is sense--order--to children's apparently disorganized texts. To discover that sense, though, we must take a long view--a developmental view--considering children's past and future efforts, and we must also take a broad view, considering not only their written texts, but also the symbolic and social forces that surrounded and shaped those texts.

To elaborate, children's first writing efforts are typically intermingled with drawing and talk, resulting in multimedia creations. Depending on the child's intentions, a label--"cowboy"--could be the written tip of an imaginary world (Dyson, 1983) or the seedling of an essay on cowboys or, more likely in Mitzi's case, on brothers (Newkirk, 1987). As writers, children's developmental challenge is to deliberately structure a "web of meaning"--to write a world (Vygotsky, 1962, p. 100). To shape that world, children must differentiate the boundaries between the written, drawn, and spoken symbol systems (Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Dyson, 1986). And, if it is to be a fictional world, they must distinguish as well between the imaginary world they are creating, the experienced world they are transforming, and the ongoing social world in which they are acting (Scarlett & Wolf, 1979).

At the same time, the boundaries between these symbolic and social worlds must be permeable: the text world is nestled within the larger symbolic and social world in which the author lives (Geertz, 1983). That image of embedded worlds arises from the work of both sociolinguists interested in literary discourse (Nystrand, 1982; Polanyi, 1982; Rader, 1982; Tannen, 1985) and literary theorists themselves (Booth, 1961; Barthes, 1974; Rosen, n.d.).

These scholars suggest that literary artists play with space/time structures, operating within multiple worlds. They shape an imaginary world in time past, but they aim as well to induce in their present time readers an anticipatory stance toward that world--their readers should wonder what *will* happen as they are drawn into the sounds and images evoked by the printed words (Rader, 1982). Thus, authors must find vantage points from which they can both energize the characters moving within their imaginary worlds and engage their readers in the real world: authors, like storytellers, face "the problems of finding a place to stand in order to report the goings on in another world while carrying out one's role as a competent and trustworthy member of society" (Polanyi, 1982, p. 169).

To illustrate the challenges inherent in the negotiation among these worlds, I refer to Mitzi's first piece. At a developmentally earlier time, Mitzi might have written "This is a cowboy," using her written text as a commentary on her drawn picture. But, in the presented piece, Mitzi marked her written world as independent of her accompanying visual art: the drawn cowboy was a present time representation of a figure from the indefinite past--"Once there was a cowboy." As suggested by her second piece, Mitzi's ambivalence about the cowboy reflected her ongoing ambivalence about boys in general and her brother in particular: the symbolic world reflected Mitzi's evaluation of her experienced world (Labov & Waletsky, 1967). And, as will be illustrated, her beckoning in of likeable "you's" reflected her efforts to use her text world, as all authors do, to connect with her ongoing social world.

Thus, to grow as creators of written worlds, children must indeed form a "verbal object isolated from the traffic of daily existence" (Britton, 1984, p. 322). And yet, their own role as creators of such a world must be to move in multiple worlds--now the real world director of the unfolding imaginary plot; now, deep in that imaginary world, an actor speaking a character's words, feeling a character's emotions; then inside a remembered world, a reflective storyteller reliving past experiences; and then, a socially astute communicator, adjusting words and phrases to ease interaction with real-world readers; simultaneously a painter of word pictures, a musician finding the contours and rhythms of word notes. Experiencing the tension between these worlds may lead to resolutions, as children find new ways of drawing on these symbolic and social resources to capture sensory experiences and social interactions within the flat spaces and colorless squiggles of written text.

Descriptions of children's progressively more organized written texts are accumulating (e.g., King & Rentel, 1981; Perera, 1984; Newkirk, 1987). To complement such studies, I focus on the sophisticated symbolic and social processes that may result in seemingly (and, for some children, increasingly) *disorganized* texts. Specifically, I intend to illustrate the tensions created when children attempt to capture pictured and oral experiences in written forms, to create an ongoing social relationship with others through a symbolic world, and to render an experienced world in an imaginary form. And I aim as well to illustrate that those tensions may result in disorganization--texts with shifts of time frames and author stances. That is, the "random" and "unorganized" flow of children's texts may be, at least in part, the result of children's developing realization of the multiple functions of literary texts and their simultaneous struggle to effect those functions through the cultural tools of writing conventions (cf., Langer, 1986, p. 4).

In the following sections, I first summarize the study, including the series of data analyses, upon which this argument is based. Next, I illustrate, drawing upon all eight case study children's work, the sorts of symbolic and social tensions that were evident in their efforts; I then present a brief summary of one case, Mitzi's, in order to illustrate how these tensions might arise and then, ultimately, be resolved over time. Finally, I consider the significance of this theoretical perspective--this view of children as operating within multiple worlds--for the developmental issues regarding children's text worlds (i.e., the role of "narratives," "non-narratives," and "expressive" writing).

THE DATA BASE

The themes of this paper were formulated during the course of a participant observation project in an urban magnet school on the west coast. The study site drew children from social and ethnic groups from across this urban community. The children were from Anglo, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, and mixed ethnicities. The school's 79 primary (K-3) grade children were separated into three "home classrooms": a kindergarten, a first/second grade, and a second/third grade. Beginning in January of the school year, all of the primary grade children moved throughout the school day among the three teachers' classrooms. The kindergarten "home" teacher, Margaret, was responsible for language arts instruction for all children throughout the data collection periods.

Margaret's language arts program centered on journals (books composed of construction paper and alternating blank and lined paper). From January through May, the children drew and wrote in their journals between two and five times weekly. During journal time, Margaret circulated, talking to the children about their ideas and the mechanics of production and, in the kindergarten, acting as scribe for their dictations. Margaret allowed time for each child to share two or three entries from their completed journals with the class.

While Margaret was only intermittently available to any individual child, she allowed them ongoing symbolic and social sources of support. Symbolically, the children could lean on drawing and on talking to help form and convey their ideas. Socially, they could lean on each other--they were free to ask each other questions and to comment on each other's work.

I observed the hour-long language arts periods in Margaret's kindergarten and first/second grade classes an average of twice per week from January through May 1985 (year 1). I began again in February 1986, observing through May 1986 (a teacher strike necessitating a February, rather than a January, starting date). During 1986 (year 2), I was aided by two research assistants; we each observed twice weekly in the first/second and second/third grade classrooms.

The first few weeks of each year were spent observing each class as a whole and establishing our role as friendly, reactive adults (Corsaro, 1981). We then gathered holistic, descriptive data: audiotapes of the children's talk, photocopies of their drawn and written products, and notes on observed behaviors; audiotapes were transcribed and integrated with the notes after each observation was completed, producing an annotated transcript of each observation. While data were gathered on all children, eight--four kindergarteners and four first graders--were chosen as case studies during year 1. All case study children had attended kindergarten at the magnet school, and thus, by the end of the project's second year, they had been together for two or three years. They were familiar with the journal activity, with Margaret, and with each other.

The case study children were all judged by Margaret to be within the range of "normal" both academically and emotionally, although they varied in social and artistic style. (These differences will be illustrated in the case study excerpts; articles documenting these differences are available in Dyson 1986, 1987a.) Table 1 provides the age, gender, and ethnicity of each child. As this is case study research, the children were not randomly selected to "represent" any particular subpopulation of children. Diversity in case study selection was considered essential in order to detect categories and patterns of behaviors that would yield a comprehensive description and interpretation of children's symbolizing behaviors.

Each focal child was observed completing one journal entry (a picture/text set generally defined by the child as "my story") at least once per month; such an observation generally took one or two days in the kindergarten and early first grade and could take as long as two weeks in the second grade, when entries were longer. (Longer entries were primarily due to the child's incorporation of several pages of writing and pictures in one "story.")

Table 1
Age, Gender, and Ethnicity of Focal Children

	Age[a]	Gender	Ethnicity
Kindergarteners			
Maggie[b]	5.0	Female	Anglo
Regina	6.0	Female	Black
Jesse	5.6	Male	Anglo
Reuben	5.10	Male	Hispanic
First graders			
Sonia	6.2	Female	Hispanic
Mitzi[c]	6.3	Female	Anglo
Jake	6.5	Male	Mixed (Black/Anglo)
Manuel	7.3	Male	Mixed (Hispanic/Anglo)

a Age as of January 1, 1985 (given in Years. Months).

b During 1985, Christopher, a kindergartener, was a focal child; Maggie was a "back up": she was observed, although less intensively, and all her journal entries were collected. During 1986, Christopher withdrew temporarily from the school, and so Maggie became a regular case study participant, Christopher, a back up.

c During the observations from February through May 1986, Mitzi was in the second/ third grade classroom; all other children were in the first/second grade room.

In all, we collected approximately 60 hours of audiotaped data in year 1, approximately 84 hours in year 2. We also collected 246 journal entries produced by the case study children; Margaret provided an additional 100 entries produced by the kindergarten case study children in the fall of year 1 before data collection began. (Generally, the first graders did not do extended writing in the fall, before they began language arts class with Margaret.) Table 2 provides the distribution of products collected.

Table 2
Number of Journal Entries Collected from Focal Children

	Grade			
	K		1st	2nd
	(Pre-Obs)[a]	(Obs)		
Maggie	25 (22.9)	13 (22.6)	9 (40.4)	
Regina	21 (19.0)	14 (27.4)	16 (24.0)	
Jesse	27 (15.1)	19 (21.8)	21 (14.0)	
Reuben	27 (19.7)	21 (19.8)	21 (22.4)	
Sonia			10 (18.2)	9 (29.1)
Mitzi			22 (20.2)	17 (49.2)
Jake			14 (22.9)	20 (50.7)
Manuel[b]			8 (17.8)	12 (22.6)
Totals	100 (19.0)	67 (22.9)	121 (22.5)	58 (37.9)

Note: The figures in parentheses indicate the average number of words per entry.

a These products were collected by the classroom teacher before the project formally began.

b Manuel's entire second grade journal comprised one story; he, however, divided the story into "parts" that could be "finished" (as in "I finished that part."). Therefore "parts," rather than "entries," are entered for second grade.

In the following section I provide an overview of the data analysis procedures used to examine this large set of collected data. I focus particularly on those procedures that led to the differentiation of the varied space/time structures--the multiple worlds--within which the children worked. As will be illustrated, my own identification of these worlds seemed to roughly parallel the children's process of differentiation. As I moved from the kindergarten through the first and second grade data, the analysis procedures became increasingly more complex to accomodate the increasingly complex behavior of the children themselves.

Data Analysis: Identifying Multiple Worlds

Since this project focused on young children's use of talk, pictures, and written text, I used inductive analysis procedures to develop categories describing the children's use of these varied media. Inductive procedures involve, first, segmenting data into similar units of behavior; second, comparing those units; and, third, composing descriptors to specify how those units vary. Those descriptors become the coding categories (see Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). By using such categories as an organizational scheme--a specialized vocabulary--for describing each case study child's composing, I aimed to understand how the children's use of these varied media changed over time.

This formal analysis process took place in four separate phases: analysis of the kindergarten data collected in year 1 (Dyson, 1986), the first grade data collected in year 1 (Dyson, 1987a), the first and second grade data collected in year 2, and finally, further analyses of all collected products. The products were further analyzed in order to provide additional support for behavior patterns (i.e., the existence of space/time tensions) qualitatively identified during the construction of the case studies--in Erickson's words, "to persuade the reader that the event described [in the qualitative narratives] was *typical*" of the data set (1986, p. 150). For the sake of clarity, then, product analysis procedures will be described during the presentation of case study excerpts.

For all phases of data analysis, the written products and annotated transcripts were organized into composing events. An event included all behaviors centered on the production of one journal entry. Next, the transcripts and products were analyzed in order to develop the coding categories, resulting in three sets of categories. Two sets focused on the children's talk (language functions, message topics), one (meaning elements) on each symbolic medium used.

The *function* categories described how the children used language to represent real and imaginary situations, to monitor and direct their own behavior (including their drawing and writing behaviors), to seek information, to express their feelings and attitudes, and to manage social relationships. The *meaning* elements coding system described the "meanings" the children expressed in different media, including the talk used to represent their imaginary worlds, the completed pictures, and the content of their written products; categories included objects, actors, actions, placement in time (past, present, future) and space, and motorsensory qualities (direction, force, speed, volume). (For illustrations of these categories, see Dyson, 1986.)

The coding system that developed most extensively throughout the data analysis process was that focused on the *topics* of the children's representational talk. That talk occurred primarily during drawing for the kindergarteners and during drawing and

writing for the first and second graders. To develop the coding system, I identified distinguishing properties or characteristics of the children's talk--differences in what they were talking about. The major categories of this system are summarized below.

Relevancy: Involvement in One's Own World

Differences were noted in the **relevancy** of the children's talk to the ongoing journal activity. During the analysis of the kindergarten data, I distinguished between *task involved* and *non-task involved* talk. Only talk that was perceived as directly relevant to the child's ongoing journal entry was considered "task involved."

Of the task involved talk, differences were noted in the degree of **symbolic involvement** in the task. A child might focus on his or her *own feelings and actions*, commenting on procedures or process ("I'm gonna make a bird in that nest."). In contrast, a child might enter the boundaries of the imaginary world, focusing on the *actions or state of the depicted figures and events* ("And she's looking at her egg . . ." [said while drawing]).

Of the talk focused on the depictions, differences were noted in the nature of the **time frame** created. A child might create a *static* time frame, in which the depicted figures do not move through time, as in the sort of time frame typically associated with a picture or a slide. Or a child might create a *dynamic* time frame, in which the depicted figures or events do move through time, as in a movie.

In analyzing the first grade data set, I identified two additional categories that reflected the nature of the children's involvement with their symbolic worlds. As a group, the first graders not only discussed the actions of the depicted figure or event; they also focused notably on the specific *figure or event being rendered* (i.e., the referent). This talk initially occurred primarily during drawing, as opposed to writing. For example, in kindergarten, Regina talked about what "this little girl" in the picture "is doing." In the first grade, she talked about what the little girl "is" like or "can" do. She even commented on which of those characteristics would be incorporated into her written text ("She's [the pictured girl] just in the Brownies, but I'm not gonna say that she's in the Brownies."). The little girl being depicted was clearly separate from the depiction itself.

The final differentiated category included talk focused on the *symbolic vehicle itself*, separate from the imagined or depicted experience. That is, the children engaged in metasymbolic talk about the qualities of the drawn or written symbols. For example, they discussed how "soft" colors were, how punctuation worked, how syntactically "good" certain phrases sounded.

Relevancy: Involvement in Others' Worlds

Beyond the changes in the "task involved" category noted above, analyzing the first grade data set led to the abandonment of the simplistic distinction between task involved and non-task involved talk and the formation of two additional categories for coding topic. First, the children frequently entered into the task of a peer, commenting on the peer's actions or even entering into the peer's imaginary world. That is, their talk was *other's task involved* and could be coded for degree of symbolic involvement

and for the type of time frame governing that talk (e.g., a child could stretch a peer's world forward in time or elaborate on a point in time).

Relevancy: Involvement in the Real World

The children's comments on each other's work often led to talk that was *task related,* the second new topic category. This talk was outside the boundaries of the particular imaginary worlds the children were creating but clearly related to those worlds. It included talk about the referent category of the figures and/or events being depicted (e.g., Mitzi's picture of a teen-age mother led to a general discussion of teen-age mothers) and talk about thematically related experiences (e.g., Mitzi's beach story led to Sonia's talk about her own beach experience). The children's talk about the broader background of concepts and experiences upon which their entries drew linked those entries more closely both to the children's past experiences and to their ongoing intellectual lives.

Certainly the observed kindergarteners talked about peers' work and related topics, but the initial research focus was the composing of individuals. The first and second graders engaged in more extended talk about the content of each others' imaginary worlds than did the kindergartners; they thus forced a broadening of this study of writing development to include not only other symbolic media, but also the children's developing relationships with each other and, more broadly, with the world around them.

In sum, then, the data analysis categories suggested the multiple worlds within which the children moved: the imaginary worlds formed from varied symbolic media--drawing, talking, writing; the ongoing social world; and the wider experienced world of people, places, objects, and events. To become a meaningful object, a world apart, a written text must be both separate from and intimately linked with such other worlds. As will be illustrated in the next section, over time the observed young composers often found themselves caught on the symbolic and social boundaries that define written worlds, and, as they wrestled with these borders, they sometimes left their footprints in their texts.

MOVEMENT AMONG MULTIPLE WORLDS: ILLUSTRATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE CASE STUDIES

In constructing each case study, I wrote a narrative account of each composing event observed, basing that description primarily on the coded and annotated transcripts. The case studies highlighted differences among the children, as each had a unique way of interacting with symbolic and social materials. The children differed in how and in how extensively they crossed symbolic boundaries to interweave drawing and talk to encode "meanings" (e.g., actors, actions, time) (Dyson, 1986). And they differed in how and how extensively they crossed social boundaries, involving other people in their own activities (Dyson, 1987a). All, however, grappled with the coordination of space/time structures and with finding their own place to stand amidst these varied worlds. These conflicts among multiple worlds were evident in the kindergarteners' dictating and in their subsequent independent writing as first graders.

In this section, I draw on all cases to illustrate these common struggles and their possible resolutions, focusing first on tensions among the differing (but overlapping) symbolic space/time structures of children's imaginary worlds and, then, on those among the imaginary, ongoing social, and wider experienced worlds. In addition, I provide summary data from the product analyses.

Tensions Among the Symbolic Worlds of Drawing, Talking, and Writing

Domination of text by visual media: Art Notes

Many of the children's first texts were inextricably linked to the space/time structures of their pictures; these texts pointed to the pictures with deictic expressions and/or progressive verbs ("This little girl is looking ..."). I labeled such texts "Art Notes" to suggest their dependence upon pictures. In year 1, 63% of all kindergarteners' products were Art Notes; in year 2, 18% of these same children's products were Art Notes. In year 1, 19% of the first graders' products were Art Notes, while in year 2, these children produced far fewer, only 7%. (Art Note coding procedures will be described below [p. 15].)

Art Notes were typically non-narrative (non-chronologically ordered), but they were not, in the context of this activity, precursors to exposition (cf. Newkirk, 1987). In addition, while an Art Note was dependent upon the child's picture, it did not necessarily capture the meanings--the imaginary world--the child had created while drawing and talking. Creating an Art Note could highlight the space/time dimensions of pictures, and, possibly, talk on the one hand, and written text, on the other.

For example, in the kindergarten and the first grade, Regina talked liberally while drawing. She elaborated on the characteristics of her drawn figures, reported any past actions leading up to their current pictured state, and predicted future actions. Her imaginary worlds thus had static time frames--they were frozen in the present, although pressing against the past and future. Art Notes were one way of reducing these bulging imaginary worlds into written texts.

For instance, in the first grade, Regina drew a little girl who was holding up her dress because "she fell into the mud puddle" and "had some stuff on her shoes, and she doesn't want her dress to get all dirty--that stuff on her stockings." Her text was an Art Note:

Writing Example 3

> This is a girl She has something on her leg's but she doesn't know that it was on her but she will know it.

When Regina reread her text, she became quite concerned: "It [the text] can't say that," she explained. The girl could not be unaware of the mud on her legs "because she's going like that [holding up her dress]." Thus, the difficulty in coordinating the time frames of the the picture and the written text led to an evaluation and revision of that text. Regina adjusted her entry to read that the girl "know now that it was on her legs" (rather than "doesn't know") and that "she will not like it" (rather than "will know it").

The juxtaposition of media influences

Children who, unlike Regina, created dynamic time frames during drawing could not solve their text creation problems with a simple Art Note. For example, Jesse's pictures were the scenes of orally dramatized adventures that, once accomplished, he did not refer to in present tense. To illustrate, Jesse had drawn a small splotch, a "motorcycle guy", and then traced the path of a wild motorcycle race. As his marker wound around the page, he commented on the action:

> "Errrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr [the sound of a motorcycle being driven] . And he falls off, and he hurts himself, and he gets back up."

To an adult reader, Jesse's subsequent text is jarring--it begins as an Art Note (the pictured splotch is labeled in present tense) but then changes abruptly to the past tense, as the previously narrated action is reported:

Writing Example 4

This is a motorcycle guy.
And then the motorcycle guy won.

The combined influence of told experiences and drawn pictures could lead to written texts that juxtaposed past, present and future time frames. While writing the following text, Jake "copied [his story] offa the picture":

Writing Example 5

> Once there WAs a three head bubble car an a jet that is running out of gasoline. Then the bulbble CAr is going to Crash. But the jet is going to blow up be cause it is out of gasoline.
> the end

Jake begins, written language-like fashion, in past tense. He then describes the current actions of the pictured vehicles and anticipates future destructive actions. Those actions were in fact accomplished in his present-tense, narrative talk during drawing, when frantic squiggles were drawn around the vehicles. (However, the pictured bubble car, which is headed towards a door, does not actually contact that door--although it is clearly "going to.")

Footprints in the texts

On the basis of the observed behaviors of Regina, Jake, Jesse, and their peers, I inferred that tensions among the overlapping space/time structures created through drawing, talk, and written texts contributed to the unexpected (from an adult perspective) tense shifts in the children's work; such tense shifts occurred in 36% of all collected products. In addition, such tensions appeared to lead to written texts, like Jesse's and Jake's, that were story-like and, yet, not technically "narratives": in these texts, movement was implied but not actually accomplished.

To document the frequency of this phenomenon, a research assistant and I analyzed all written products. From our viewpoint as adult readers, we judged whether narrative movement was absent, implied, or actually accomplished

in each text (i.e., there were two temporally-ordered, independent clauses presenting action or a character's reaction [adapted from Labov & Waletsky, 1967]). As we reflected on the basis for our judgements, we turned to media metaphors: a text with no movement suggests a slide, a text with accomplished movement suggests a movie, while one with implied movement suggests a frame lifted from a movie--it has linguistic sprockets. Most typically, these sprockets were tense shifts that implied accomplished movement (as in Jesse's shift from the existing motorcycle guy to the race that *was* won) or imminent movement (as in Jake's establishment of the "once-upon-a-time" bubble car facing impending disasters).

These categories of movement are emic, that is, designed to reveal changes in this data set. After refining these categories, we each independently coded the 346 products and discussed all products with discrepant coding. To measure our consistency as judges, we coded and then determined inter-rater reliability for a random selection of 50 products, drawn from all eight cases; we agreed in our judgement of 92% of the products. The results of our analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Presence of Movement in Children's Texts

	Percentage of Products		
Grade[a]	**No Movement**	**Implied Movement**	**Movement**
K '85			
Pre-Obs[b]	65% (64)	20% (20)	14% (14)
Obs	43% (29)	22% (15)	34% (23)
1st '86	45% (30)	28% (19)	27% (18)
1st '85	65% (35)	19% (10)	17% (9)
2nd '86	27% (16)	26% (15)	47% (27)
Total	51% (174)	23% (79)	26% (91)

Note: The figures in parentheses indicate the number of products.

a "K '85" and "1st '86" refer to the products collected from Maggie, Regina, Jesse, and Reuben. "1st '85" and "2nd '86" refer to the products collected from Sonia, Mitzi, Jake, and Manuel.

b Two texts were eliminated as they were copied from the chalkboard due to the direction of a substitute teacher.

The product analysis, unlike the case studies, does not consider the intentions of individual children and, indeed, masks individual variation. Nonetheless, the analysis does suggest that the qualitative excerpts taken from the cases are indicative of space/time tensions that appeared frequently in the children's work. Although the children were primarily concerned with creating imaginative worlds--worlds that existed through their deliberate symbolic efforts--the majority of their texts did not contain narrative movement, as here defined. However, while approximately 2/3 of the first graders' texts produced in year 1 contained no movement, in Year 2 approximately 2/3 of the then second graders' texts at least implied movement.

Resolving tensions through manipulation of symbolic resources

To this point, I have illustrated that the symbolic resources these young composers leaned upon, drawing and talking, also posed challenges. At the same time, however, those resources could be drawn upon in new ways to resolve these very challenges. For example, the order of drawing and then writing could be changed or more than one picture/text set could be incorporated into one journal entry, thereby breaking through the space/time limitations posed by a picture frame.

This latter resolution appeared in year 2 and was used by all four second graders and, in the last month of school, by one first grader; its use was initially prompted by a long text that spilled over onto another lined page. Generally, scenes depicted in each sequenced picture were described or dramatized in an accompanying text; these texts might be linked through adverbials (***next, then, all of a sudden***). Sonia juxtaposed pictures for her first (and only) written narrative that extended beyond two temporally-related actions, although she did not actually link her texts. Presented without her pictures and her accompanying talk, the written text seems disjointed:

Writing Example 6

Happy birthday Sonia
"Today is your birthday,"
said Mom. The lights were
turned on. [accompanying picture of balloons and swirls of crepe paper]

"Let's eat the spaghetti. m-m-m"
said everybody. "Mom, can we have the ice cream?
"Yes, cleanup kids". "Mom can we watch
the TV?" "Yeees". [accompanying picture of three little girls sitting at a huge table that is spread with birthday food]

"What will we watch?" "I don't know.
"what is on?" Too close for comfort.
"Who wants to watch that?"
"I don't know" but I do" [accompanying picture of little girl watching television]

"Play time," said Sonia. "What will
we play?" Let's play house". [accompanying picture of two little girls lying flat on either end of a mattress; this page is meant to be funny--and is, I think--as, actually, it's time for bed]

As Sonia's text also illustrates, a child's use of written "talk" could also support narrative movement. That talk could be similar to the dramatic dialogue certain

children used during drawing, or, as in Sonia's text, it could be more written language-like (i.e., "said- [character]" constructions). All of the case study children made use of dialogue, a particularly helpful strategy, as, even within one picture frame, the passage of time could be captured as characters exchanged talk.

Regina, in the first grade, illustrated dramatically the potential power of written dialogue. The elaborate talk surrounding her drawings was described earlier (see discussion of Example 3). Regina first produced written texts containing narrative movement by abandoning those imaginary worlds constructed through pictures and speech and by turning to written language-like dialogues.

For example, during one event Regina talked elaborately, in present tense, about "Candy Land", which she was drawing; in this land,

> When it rains, people are--they come outside. Some people on this side, um that side [of the drawn candy house], they want lemonade. On this side, they want chocolate sprinkles on this side....

And so Regina drew raindrops of lemonade and chocolate sprinkles. However, when she went to write, a new scene was constructed:

Writing Example 7

> I found the Candy House where My Friends lived. It's us said them. Hi I said. Can I come in? Yes they said. Come in. We have three dogs. Wow wee I said.

All four of Regina's first grade narratives involved dialogue and incorporation of new meanings (new information beyond that included in her talk during drawing). Regina thus appeared to develop her texts linearly, in striking contrast to her development of imaginary worlds during drawing and talking, when she alternately recalled the past, anticipated the future, and described the present. Her linear "what next" strategy (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1982) is generally considered young children's simplest strategy for text construction (Graves, 1983; Harris & Wilkinson, 1986). Yet, that strategy clearly had a role in the growth of Regina and her peers as composers, as manipulators of time and space.

The children's writing was progressively less influenced by drawing and accompanying talk (for similar observations, see Rosen & Rosen, 1974; Graves, 1983; Newkirk, 1987). During year 2, the second graders--Mitzi, Jake, Manuel, and, less often, Sonia--subordinated both drawing and writing to a meaning, a potential message, that may have been stimulated by a personal memory, a story from a book or the television, or even a story that had evolved during drawing but, through frequent repetition, gained independence. This subordination was particularly critical for children who did not use talk extensively during drawing to construct an imaginary world; these children often had great difficulty finding a verbal story in a picture and frequently voiced, in less direct ways, Sonia's explicit plea: "Do you see anything in this story [picture]?"

These new overriding meanings had an existence, however hazily, separate from the drawn and the written depictions. This existence was reflected in the children's talk, during both drawing and writing, about the figure or event being rendered: the symbolic tool of talk became the mediator between the more differentiated space/time

structures of pictures and written texts. So, second grader Manuel, for example, studied both his picture and his written text, as he worried about whether or not his readers would understand his story. Implicitly, Manuel was acknowledging that both his story and his readers' stories were mediated by, realized in and through, his symbols (Iser,1974). This brings us to children's use of written texts to participate in the social world around them, a topic of the following section.

Tensions among the Symbolic, Ongoing Social, and Experienced Worlds

To this point, I have examined the tensions arising from crossing symbolic borders, particularly those that arose in the observed activity as children worked to render their drawn and, often, spoken worlds in (at least compatible) written worlds. But there were other worlds being moved among as well, worlds which contributed not only to shifting time frames within written texts but also to shifts in children's roles as authors--in the personal stances they adopted toward their text worlds.

As documented in the previous section, over time the children's work became less oriented around their pictures. Art Notes like "This little girl is happy" or "The ghost is flying around the house" became much less common. At the same time, as authors, the children became progressively more involved in both their ongoing social world and the wider experienced world. As will be illustrated, these role changes were reflected in their talk, as it evidenced this increased interest in their peers' activity and in how their peers' and their own journal entries related to the way the world worked. Changes in the children's roles--as well as the children's ambivalence about their roles--were also reflected in their texts. I turn first to those texts.

Footprints in the texts

To document these tracings of children's role changes, a research assistant and I, regularly joined by an additional assistant, studied the written products. As adult readers, we identified the roles or stances children appeared to be taking vis-a-vis their written worlds, refining categories initially developed during construction of the case studies. In our judgement, a child might assume the role of *commentator* on the pictured world (reflected in an Art Note), *observer* of a world forming within the text itself (reflected in a third person stance in a text that was not an Art Note), or *actor* within that world (reflected in a first person stance in a non-Art Note text).

At times, children appeared to abruptly change stances, as in Mitzi's texts at the beginning of this article; such texts were classified as shifting between two different stances. For example, Mitzi's texts were coded Observer/Actor (i.e., she shifted from an observer of an imagined cowboy to an actor who hated that cowboy).

In our analysis, we followed the procedures described for coding narrative movement; inter-rater reliability for a random selection of 50 products was 94%. The results of our analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 illustrates this group of children's movement away from commentator roles and, also, their relatively late adoption of roles as actors in their own imaginary, written worlds, a finding consistent with Harprin's findings on British children (cited in Perera, 1984); texts coded as embodying the actor role doubled between the first and second grade. Even children like Jesse, who dramatized--was an actor within--his

Table 4
Personal Stance in Children's Texts

	Percentage of Products					
Grade[a]	**Art Notes**	**Art Notes/ Observor**	**Art Notes/ Actor**	**Observor/ Actor**	**Observor**	**Actor**
K '85						
Pre-Obs[b]	67% (66)	16% (16)	5% (5)	0% (0)	5% (5)	6% (6)
Obs	57% (38)	37% (25)	0% (0)	0% (0)	6% (4)	0% (0)
1st '86	18% (12)	9% (6)	6% (4)	0% (0)	46% (31)	20% (14)
1st '85	19% (10)	15% (8)	2% (1)	24% (13)	20% (11)	20% (11)
2nd '86	7% (4)	5% (3)	3% (2)	16% (9)	28% (16)	42% (24)
Total	38% (130)	17% (58)	3% (12)	6% (22)	19% (67)	16% (55)

Note: The figures in parentheses indicate the number of products.

a "K '85" and "1st '86" refer to the products collected from Maggie, Regina, Jesse, and Reuben. "1st '85" and "2nd '86" refer to the products collected from Sonia, Mitzi, Jake, and Manuel.

b These products were collected by the classroom teacher before the project formally began.

drawn worlds, generally remained outside his written worlds: as an author, he moved first from a role as commentator on pictures to an observer of actions. Jesse's "motorcycle guy" (Example #4) is illustrative: Jesse begins by commenting on his picture ("This is a motorcyle guy") and then becomes an observer reporting a past action ("And then the motorcyle guy won.").

As will be illustrated in both the following case study excerpts and Mitzi's case summary, the children did not only mark their existence within their written worlds through the use of "I"; they left their mark less explicitly through revealing the internal worlds (the thoughts and feelings) of their characters. In Bruner's words, the children evidenced emerging abilities to "construct two landscapes simultaneously," for the imaginary world consists of both the landscape of actors and actions described in story grammars and the "landscape of consciousness: what those involved in the action know, think, or feel, or do not know, think, or feel" (1986, p. 14).

The children's movement into their written worlds seemed related to the decreasing influence of drawing. And, simultaneously, it seemed supported by the children's use of those text worlds to move within the wider world, including the ongoing social world of the classroom.

The written texts' role in the social world

Over time, the children's written texts played an increasingly larger social role within the life of the classroom (for an extended discussion of the social life in this room and literacy's role in that life, see Dyson, in press). The children could quite literally bring the social life of the classroom into their written texts. Dialogue, already noted as a strategy for creating dynamic movement in texts, was also a way of incorporating social interaction into the texts themselves. Another was the fictionalization of self and peers.

For example, in the first grade Jake engaged in dramatic play with his friends while he drew, creating elaborate oral adventures. However, during writing, he "copied offa the picture," and thus his texts described his pictures (see Example 5). During the second grade, Jake began to engage in interactive dramatic play during *writing*, and, moreover, he brought that play into his texts. With this support from peers (and from talk), he broke through the time constraints of a picture frame; further, he evidenced more awareness of the boundaries of the imaginary world being shaped in written words:

Jake has been writing a story in which Manuel meets Buck Rogers:

Jake: Uh, Manuel! You get to see Buck Rogers!

Manuel: What?

Jake: Buck Rogers.

Manuel: Oh. Oh. *You mean in your story.* [emphasis added]

Jake: Yeah. Buck Rogers, twenty-first century person.
. . . [omitted data]

[to Marcos, Manuel's brother] You wouldn't see your brother again, ever again Marcos. *You would never see him in a story again.*" [emphasis added]

Marcos: I wouldn't?

Jake: In my stories, uh uh. Cause that would be the last. Eepoof! Nothing.

Manuel: Oh God. Oh, well, it's been fun having adventures with you. Um, but I'm gonna get blown to pieces.
. . .

Jake: You might get your butt saved by Buck Rogers. You want your butt saved by Buck Rogers?

Manuel: What I want is my body saved. I don't wanna die. I don't wanna--
. . .

Jake: You want your whole body saved by Buck Rogers?

In Jake's story, Buck does teach Manuel how to take on the bad guys--Manuel's existence in the text world is secured.

Jake's apparent discovery that texts could be used to socially interact with his peers led to more elaborate but also more unstable worlds. Jake-the-observer telling about a world abruptly became Jake-the-actor in the thick of things. And, as he did so, the time frame governing that world typically changed as well: his "once-upon-a- time" worlds often became the sites of present tense encounters:

Writing Example 8

> Once there was a boy that is named manuel. manuel is going to fly the fastest jet and I am going to fly the jet too. But Manuel's headquarters is going to blow up But I am OK. But I don't know about manuel but I am going to find manuel. But When I find him I like him. But I think I see him. He is in the jet. Manuel are you OK? Yes, I am OK. you are being attacked. I will shoot the bad guys out of the universe. OK yes shoot them now. the end

Jake's example suggests a connection between the role written texts played in the children's social lives and the degree to which the children entered into those texts, a connection suggested, in different ways, by all of the case studies, including Mitzi's. With their feet in both their ongoing social world and the imaginative text world, their texts certainly could be unstable. The children were quite literally both creating a relationship between characters in their texts and sustaining a relationship with friends in their social worlds. In time, though, those others may become distanced readers, not interested peers sitting right beside them.

Tension between the experienced and the symbolic world

Over time the children became increasingly concerned about the relationship of their written worlds to the experienced world. From the beginning of the project, certain children sometimes wrote what seemed to be texts about personal experiences. But, without consulting the child authors, it was impossible to judge whether or not the texts actually were "real"--reports of parties, long walks, the existence of siblings, a move to a new house were, upon inquiry, "fake," to use Sonia's descriptor. And texts that were framed as "unreal" were sometimes quite real--"Once upon a time there was a girl Which is Me."

In the context of this activity, the children generally viewed their writing as "pretend." However, they were concerned about the validity of these "pretend" worlds. The kindergarteners might say indignantly, "That's not what a _____ looks like"; the more experienced first and second graders were just as apt to voice "That's not true" about a peer's text--and, on occasion, even raised the most sophisticated objection of all, "That wouldn't happen!"

As they moved between their imaginary and real worlds, the children confronted developmentally taxing issues for young children: What is "true"? How true does "not true" have to be? (Piaget, 1929; Applebee, 1978). Manuel was explicit about these issues, even in the first grade; in an attempt to end a long, loud argument about the possibility of a bomb making a volcano, he said, "Well, anyway, it's a pretend story. In real life, it may [not] be true."

The following interaction between Mitzi and Sonia also illustrates this tension between the experienced and the real world:

Writing Example 9 (included in transcript excerpts)

Mitzi has used "Snoopy stickers" to create a picture of the cartoon character Snoopy and a small bear at the beach. She then writes:

> Once there was a bear. And there was Snoopy too. They were

She stops and comments:

Mitzi: OK, there'll be a little tiny sister.

Sonia overhears her:

Sonia: They were sisters?

Mitzi: Yeah.

Sonia: Snoopy isn't a girl.

Mitzi: I know. Sister AND brother.

Mitzi completes her text:

> [They were] sister and brother. And they were at the beach. **Snoopy is a boy** and the bear was the girl. The End. [emphasis added]

Mitzi's text seems disjointed. She temporarily changes her role as writer, a change too sophisticated for our role coding system. She abandons her observational perch by the imaginary world, set in the indefinite past, to make a "real" world observation about Snoopy.

Truth in imaginary worlds depends primarily upon capturing the quality of human experiences or "psychic reality" (Bruner, 1986, p. 14). The children typically captured the quality of experiences in their pictures; by second grade, the children's drawn characters could register such qualities as surprise, wickedness, fear, sadness, joy. However, as discussed in the previous section, capturing their own peer relationships in their texts could help provide this quality, this insight into the internal world of characters.

In addition, the children could comment directly on the quality of the imaginary world or on an element of that world. Such comments on, or evaluations of, experiences occurred primarily in the talk surrounding the children's texts. But, occasionally, those statements were tacked on, as in the following story by Jake; notice his role change from the observer of a past and imaginary jet to an actor sharing the present with that jet and expressing his amazement at its existence:

Writing Example 10

Once upon a time
there was a helicopter that was the
fastest helicopter in the world.
But the helicopter
can fly in two seconds.
I can't believe
that it can. [emphasis added]

Means of resolving tensions among symbolic, social, and experienced worlds

In general, the children's behaviors during journal time, as well as their written texts, reflected the *discovery of*, more than the *resolution of*, the tensions illustrated in this section. As the children's texts became more involved with their ongoing and experienced worlds, new complications arose. The children's social world--their use of fictionalized self and peers, their use of dialogue--could destabilize as well as enrich their written worlds. In addition, the children's increasing attention to the relationship between their texts and their real world experiences raised new issues for them, particularly about fictional reality. The children had to find ways of rendering the meanings--the essence--of their experienced worlds more directly in written forms.

The first textual signs of the evaluation of experience--other than "I like ____"--was the use of certain graphic conventions; these graphics, including exclamation points or playful spellings ("OOOOOOOOOOH!!!!!!!!!"), mimic the ability of the voice to convey the perceived quality of experience (Cook-Gumperz & Gumperz, 1981).

Even fluent, adolescent writers may be far from skilled in embedding the quality of an experience in textual description and narration of actors and their actions (Dixon & Stratta, 1986). Yet certain focal children did evidence emerging skill. For example, in the kindergarten, Maggie had often been silly with her texts (e.g., reading them in a falsetto voice), but her texts themselves had not been funny. Late in the first grade year, though, she began to find them quite funny ("I can't believe what I'm writing. This is so funny.").

One funny text was a story about two friends, Alice and Lacey. Maggie orally elaborated upon her written characters: "Alice and Lacey are the real people. They're real names. Anyone could be them." These "anyones" had a common experience, particularly common for Maggie--they were consistently late to school: as she put it in her text, "as usual they Got a tarDy tag again." The "as usual" reflects the resigned but slightly amused stance Maggie herself often adopted.

Such fictionalization of experiences and their qualities, which will be further illustrated in Mitzi's case summary, seems critical. It is the controlled meshing of the experienced and the imaginary world that ultimately allows authors and readers to connect--that allows their social interaction to occur: Authors evaluate their own life experiences through writing--and readers draw on their own "repertoires of conceptions about human plights" to experience the sights and sounds cued by print (Bruner, 1986, p. 34, drawing upon the work of Barthes, 1974, and Iser, 1974).

In the preceding pages, I have pulled apart the many worlds children operate in as writers--worlds that are in fact inextricably linked. I have highlighted those texts where certain space/time structures protruded awkwardly--an unexpected "Do you like cowboys?" or "I can't believe that it can." These seemingly disorganized texts, when viewed within the context of individual children's case histories, suggested the theoretical frame presented here, this frame of multiple worlds. In the next section of this article, I pull these worlds together again by summarizing the case history of Mitzi.

MITZI: AN ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

Mitzi, like all the case study children, grappled with the coordination of space/time structures. Her ways of negotiating among worlds changed dramatically over the two years of observation, so her case serves especially well to illustrate the process of learning to negotiate among multiple worlds. However, since this was case study research--and thus the unit of concern was the individual, not the group--Mitzi does not serve in any way to represent "group norms." As noted earlier, the case study children were selected precisely because they varied as symbolizers and socializers. Thus, each case differed in particular ways from all other cases. Nonetheless, each contributed to--made sensible--the theoretical perspective on writing development presented here, this concept of multiple worlds. It is this broad perspective--this way of making sense of child behavior--that is illustrated by the particular experiences of each unique child, including Mitzi.

Mitzi was a tall, slender child with a low, soft voice and a straightforward manner. Throughout the two years of observation, her behaviors consistently reflected her involvement with her friends and her family. However, the relationship of Mitzi's journal entries to her ongoing social life in school and to her wider experienced world, including her family, changed over time, as did the relationship among the drawing, talking, and writing behaviors leading to and surrounding those entries.

First Grade

During year 1, Mitzi's written texts appeared only superficially related to her drawings. In this way, Mitzi's texts differed from those of other first grade cases, whose texts included at least partial Art Notes. Mitzi's texts, in contrast, directly presented her feelings about people--real, imaginary, or simply unspecified ("I like you."). Mitzi generally began a journal entry by drawing a picture of a little girl against a background. While drawing, she did talk with her peers, but, unlike certain other children's talk, Mitzi's talk was not directly involved in her ongoing drawing. She talked about her family and friends--whom she liked and whom she hated.

After drawing, Mitzi quickly produced a written entry. As in the texts opening this report, most of Mitzi's entries began with a "once-there-was" opening, followed by a label for the drawn entity. Next came a statement of her own feelings (or, perhaps, "yours") about that entity. Thus, as indicated by Table 5, Mitzi's texts, like those of all first grade cases, were primarily non-narrative; 86% contained no movement through time. And, in over half (59%) of her texts, she shifted her own stance as author from an observer of an imaginary world set in the past to an actor in a present time world, as in the following example:

Writing Example 11

Once There was a girl
She might like You.
She liveds under a rainbow.
I like You. The End

Table 5
Mitzi's Written Products

	Grade	
Product Descriptor	1[a]	2[b]
Movement		
No Movement	86% (19)	41% (7)
Implied Movement	0% (0)	6% (1)
Movement	14% (3)	53% (9)
Stance		
Art Notes/Actor	0% (0)	6% (1)
Observor/Actor	59% (13)	29% (5)
Observor	18% (4)	18% (4)
Actor	23% (5)	47% (8)
Inclusion of Others		
"You"	36% (8)	6% (1)
Names of peers and family members	23% (5)	53% (9)

Note: The figures in parentheses indicate the number of products.

[a] $n = 22$.

[b] $n = 17$.

While the process of producing written texts was no doubt eased by Mitzi's repetitive "I like's," her products were not simply texts of convenience. They reflected

the symbolic and social resources that she leaned upon for help. During drawing, Mitzi did not create elaborate stories--the picture provided only a figure or an object to be labeled. And, as noted above, Mitzi's talk during journal time centered on relationships. Thus, Mitzi's texts seemed to grow primarily from her relationships with significant others. In fact, in one event, Mitzi abandoned her typical "once-upon-a-time" frame and brought her text directly into her ongoing social life:

Writing Example 12 (included in transcript excerpt)

While completing a piece in her journal, Mitzi has been talking about her upcoming birthday/slumber party with Sonia. Sonia frequently seeks reassurance from Mitzi about their friendship, as the following conversation suggests:

Sonia: Where am I going to sleep?

Mitzi: Me and Bessie are gonna sleep up on the top [of Mitzi's bunk bed].

Sonia: Oh. Who's gonna sleep on the bottom? Your brother. Where am I gonna sleep, Mitz?

Mitzi: You're gonna sleep in my sleeping bag.

Mitzi immediately begins writing a new journal entry; this entry includes the names of all the children invited to her party:

> [Text] I like Sally. And I like Sonia too. And I like Elizabeth [Bessie] and I like Sarah. The End

Sonia does not dismiss the significance of this text:

Sonia: Mitzi, you love me. (very pleased)

Mitzi: I said *like*, not *I love*. (firmly)

Mitzi's texts related in a similarly unadorned way to her feelings about her family. Since these references to family often followed imaginative openings, they resulted in texts that mixed fantasy and reality, as in the following example (see also Example 2):

Writing Example 13 (included in transcript)

Mitzi has worked intensively on a large, carefully detailed picture of a mean-looking witch. She is quite pleased with her drawing, remarking that it is her "favorite story." She now begins to write:

> Once there was a witch.
> She is my mom.

Jenni and Bessie, who are sitting nearby, attend to Mitzi's rereading of her story:

Jenni: I have a witch mother.

Mitzi: What?

Jenni: I have a real witch mother. My mother's a friend of a witch.

Mitzi: A bad one?

Jenni: No, a good one/bad one.

Mitzi may be feeling uneasy about referring to the witch as her mother, for she now writes:

I love my mom

Bessie and Jenni seem to be concerned about Mitzi's text as well:

Bessie: You shouldn't share it [with the class].

Mitzi: She's a bad witch. (pointing to her picture)

Jenni: Then you're a bad girl.

Perhaps a little girl who writes that her own mother is a witch is a bad girl indeed, from Jenni's point of view. Mitzi seems to interpret Jenni's statement similarly:

Mitzi: No, I'm not. I might not even like my mom, or I love my mom.

At this point, Mitzi draws a conversation bubble next to her drawn witch and writes:

I am bad.

In this example, the varied worlds Mitzi moved among as a writer were quite visible. There was the present two-dimensional "story" of the carefully drawn witch and the overlapping "once-there-was" world she began to shape with written words; these symbolic worlds were embedded within the ongoing peer social world and, also, within her wider experienced world, for her current feelings about her mom pulled in the world beyond the classroom walls.

However, in this example, Mitzi's text is related to her social life in less direct ways than in previous examples. Mitzi's social relationship with her friends was mediated by the written world she created (and they re-created), a world both separate from and yet embedded in their shared world, and this created world affected others' behaviors toward her just as did the more direct "I like Sonia." In both Examples 12 and 13, however, the reactions of her friends seemed to have highlighted for Mitzi both the text world itself (e.g., "*like*, not I *love*") and the social world within which it exists. Indeed, spontaneous peer response served a similar role in all eight cases (for an elaboration of the role of peers, see Dyson 1987c).

Despite Mitzi's consistent combining of "once-there-was" openings and references to apparently real and present-time others, she was not oblivious to the inherent conflict between truth in imaginary and real worlds. Indeed, while the observed

children as a group argued about the truth quality of pictures and texts, this issue of ficional truth was a particularly consistent theme in Mitzi's case. She regularly voiced her concern about whether or not *other children's* journal entries were "true." She even accused Jake once of "lying" in his story. In the second grade, though, Mitzi became more concerned about *her own* combining of social, experienced, and imaginary worlds. She developed more sophisticated ways of moving among those space/time structures and, in addition, found new ways of coordinating symbolic media to create her imaginary worlds.

Second Grade

Before beginning her second grade journal, Mitzi organized a table of contents:

Writing Example 14

1. Me and my friend
2. Me and my dream
3. Me and My
4. Me and My

While I had inferred Mitzi's concern about human relationships in the first grade, no such inference was necessary in the second. As Mitzi said, "It's going to be me me me me me and and and." When her friends Bessie and Jenni described their stories as being about bunnies and cats respectively, Mitzi noted, "Mine are about people."

Although Mitzi's concerns remained the same, her composing behaviors changed. To begin, Mitzi's use of drawing changed, as did, to varying degrees, that of all second grade focal children. Rather than beginning her journal entries by drawing, Mitzi drew after finishing her written text; drawing became a way of illustrating her ideas. Mitzi's abandonment of the initial drawing phase may have been interrelated with her abandonment of her repetitive text routine as well. Rather than building affective statements around her drawn figures, in the second grade she frequently relied upon personal experiences or fictionalized personal experiences for her texts.

Interwoven with this change in the use of drawing was continued change in Mitzi's use of writing to participate in her ongoing peer social life and to evaluate her experiences in the wider world. Mitzi's relationships were now not only mediated by but often embedded in her imaginary worlds. Rather than straightforward "I like you" statements, Mitzi incorporated peers and family members into her texts as characters who could then interact with a fictionalized "I"; 53% of her texts now contained the names of peers and/or family members, compared with 23% in the first grade (see Table 5). Thus Mitzi, like all second grade focal children, used the narrative form to dynamically play out her relationships with others, and thus her texts, like theirs, more often moved through time (see Table 5). In addition to incorporating her relationships into her texts, Mitzi, again like all second grade focal children, began to spontaneously share her texts with her peers, as the ability of the texts to entertain others became socially more important.

These social behaviors described above are illustrated in the following example. In this example Mitzi appears to use talk about the soon-to-be rendered world both to plan her written imaginary world and to engage her real world friend Jenni:

Writing Example 15 (included below)

Mitzi has begun writing:

> Me and My Dream
>
> I had a dream and My dream was a Big Nightmare and This is My Nightmare. Once there was a boy

Mitzi stops and erases *boy*. She turns to Jenni:

> Now this is going to be a true dream.
> . . .
> This is a nightmare I once had and the girl was you.

Jenni: Yeah?

Mitzi: And you really hated me.

Jenni: No wonder it's a nightmare.

The ideas discussed with Jenni appear in Mitzi's completed story, which vacillates between the past and the present:

> I had a dream and My dream was a BiG NiGhtMare. and This is My NiGhtMare. Once there was a Girl and her name was Jenni and she hated Me. But I do not know why. and she had a magic bulb. her bulb was a very powerful bulb. It was so powerful it turned Me into a Powerful bulb and now she has Two Powerfull Bulbs. The one that is Me is even Powerfuller than the other one. The End.

As soon as she finished her text, Mitzi turned to Jenni:

> OK, want me to read this to you? It's very funny.

Incorporating real others into imaginary worlds highlighted the relationship between the experienced, the ongoing social, and the symbolic worlds, and more particularly, the issue of truth in fiction. In Example 15, Mitzi used the concepts of "magic" and of "dreaming" to incorporate the real-world Jenni into a non-real world: "This is a true dream." Mitzi's accompanying picture fleshed out the fanciful quality of that dream. In the text, Jenni is simply Jenni with a magical bulb; in the picture, Jenni has witch-like nose and hands and is saying "He, He, He"; the bulbs look like crystal balls. Mitzi had thus produced a "funny" imaginary world that included Jenni; this world reflected Mitzi's love/hate experiences with a variety of significant others, including Jenni; Mitzi used her imaginary entry about Jenni to engage her friend in the ongoing social world they shared.

In order to meld the imaginary and the real world in comfortable ways--without the use of dreams and magic--one must contextualize the essence of a real experience in an imaginary one. And, as suggested in the writing example above, Mitzi was

beginning to do this. Ambivalent emotions--the liking and hating of her first grade texts--were no longer her personal reactions to depicted or, occasionally, real figures. Rather, they were more firmly embedded in a drama (Jenni hated her and turned her into a bulb). Indeed, all four second grade focal children produced at least some texts that conveyed the internal world of their characters. In Mitzi's case, those emotions evolved from simply liking and hating to include secrets and betrayal, as in the following imaginative story. In the text, entitled "How My Life Was," Mitzi had a twin sister. (In real life, her friend Jenni had a twin brother.)

Writing Example 16

> I said to my sister one day that I was going to run away. My sister screamed, "Oh no." My mother and father ran down the stairs. "What happened" they said. My sister was beginning to say that I was going to run away When I ran across the room and covered her Mouth. The End. [In the accompanying picture are two little girls, one labeled "me," the other, "my twin."]

Throughout the second grade observations, Mitzi grappled with the relationship between her standard "once-there-was" openings and real-world experiences and with that between the real experiences of "I" and the essence of those experiences as retold by a fictive "I." Example 16, written in mid-April, was Mitzi's first imaginative piece that did not have a variation of "once-there-was" as an opening--above the piece Mitzi wrote "not true" in small letters. Although Mitzi continued to mark imaginative stories "not true," she had become both more flexible and more conventional about openings and about her texts in general. She no longer began true written texts about friends or family with "once there was," and she began her imaginative texts in varied ways and, also, consistently wrote them in past tense.

In the final observed event of year 2, Mitzi wrote a deceptively simple text about cats and birds. Of all the pieces in her first and second grade journals, this was the first imaginary text containing narrative movement in which she was an *observer*, rather than an *actor*. Certainly kindergarteners and first graders produced texts coded similarly--what was distinctive about this text was the sophisticated manipulation of worlds it involved. As will be illustrated, Mitzi clearly separated the imaginary from the real world: "They're my made-up cats," she told Yamyha. Further, her text, assisted by the picture, conveyed something of the quality of the cats' experience--their abrupt surprise, tragic for the birds. Mitzi had first conveyed such qualities when she became a character in a drama: in this text, however, Mitzi was no longer the "I" in the thick of things but the distant creator of a logical if fanciful world. Finally, the content of this distant world provided a social link to Jenni, who was fascinated by and consistently wrote about cats. In the following excerpt, Mitzi's sophisticated movement among the imaginary, social, and experienced world is reflected in her talk:

Writing Example 17 (included below)

> Mitzi's friends have been writing about cats, and, on this day, Mitzi wants to write about cats too. Since, days earlier, she wrote the title for the entry, she knows that the story has to have something to do with "The Surprise Party."

Mitzi: Jenni, what can I write about? Um, I'm thinking about cats. It's gonna be a surprise party about cats. What should I write about? You're good, you're good at that. You're good at this [i.e., writing about cats], Jenni. Jenni you're good at that! (pause) I know! A bird that'll go and kill a cat!

Yahmya does find this surprising.

Yahmya: A vulture?

Mitzi: No! They're my made-up cats. Once I made up some cats. Once I made up some cats. And there were some birds. Birds! And they eat'em too.

Yahmya: They eat CATS?

Mitzi: Mm mmm.

When Mitzi finally begins writing, however, she writes about cats that eat birds. Perhaps Yahmya's critique of the reverse situation has made her reconsider. After writing her piece, Mitzi begins drawing a tree and soon realizes that she needs "dead birds down here" under her tree.

Jenni: Cats?

Mitzi: Yeah--listen:

"Once there was a bunch of cats. Then all of a sudden there came a flock of birds. This was a BIG surprise to the cats. At once the cats started to kill them."

Mitzi read "the cats started to kill them," although she has actually written "they started to kill them." The confusion with Yamyha and now with Jenni over who was killing whom--and her own change of plans--may have led to this change in the text. (Later, she will erase *they* and substitute *the cats*.)

Darius: Meow, meow, meow.

Jenni suggests a strategy for avoiding a page full of dead birds:

Jenni: You can put some flying away up here.

Mitzi pauses and then has yet another thought:

Mitzi: No, I know what I'm going to do.

Mitzi then adds "and eat them" to the last line of her text, eliminating the need for dead birds. She draws one bird; it's crying as it hovers near the tree.

In this event, Mitzi produced a carefully coordinated picture and story that combined to tell a sensible, imaginary tale to her interested, inquisitive friends. The text seems written from the point of view of the cats, but the picture depicts the internal feelings of the lone surviving bird. As the event illustrates, Mitzi had progressed from "I like you" journal entries surrounded by social talk to written worlds in which characters liked, hated, were surprised and saddened, betrayed and befriended.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS: THE MULTIPLE WORLDS OF CHILD WRITERS

In this report, I have examined how eight primary grade children composed imaginary worlds, emphasizing changes in that composing over two years of observation. The observed children's text worlds were, as a group, gradually less governed by drawing and any accompanying talk: to oversimplify, as authors of imaginary worlds, the group moved from a tendency to comment on pictures, to a tendency to observe scenes and, finally, to act within dynamic worlds. At the same time, however, their composing behaviors suggested that their use of writing became progressively more involved with their ongoing social and their wider experienced worlds: the children specifically shared and discussed their *written* messages and the relationship of those messages to the wider world rather than only to their pictures (e.g., "That's not true" occurred along with "That doesn't look like a . . ."). Indeed, generic characters gave way to named ones, who were often fictionalized peers and family members.

The focal children's unexpected oral and textual excursions into varied space/time structures (unexpected shifts of tense and author role, movement realized in talk but only implied in text) suggested that these young authors wrestled with and, at times, got caught on the borders between differing symbolic and social space/time structures, differing worlds. To help resolve these tensions, the children found new ways to use the resources offered by these worlds (e.g., sequencing pictures to capture narrative movement; incorporating talk--dialogue--into their texts; fictionalizing self, peers, and experiences to meld the ongoing social, the wider experienced, and the evolving symbolic world in new ways).

In different classrooms, under different instructional contexts, children might have different symbolic and social resources and, thus, the specific nature of their behaviors might be different. However, while the specific behaviors of the focal children cannot be generalized, the social and symbolic tensions identified--and the theoretical perspective they gave rise to--seem potentially generalizable; this perspective is, as discussed throughout this article, consistent with scholarship in both literary discourse and child language development. Thus, I have argued here that the developmental challenge of writing imaginary texts is the working out of the writer's relationship to both self and others in past, present, and future time and space. Writers, while centered on the evolving text world, carry out multiple roles and coordinate multiple space/time structures.

Certainly the dynamic relationships between text and contexts have been a focus of ethnographic studies of particular groups (e.g., Heath, 1983; Cochran-Smith & Schiefflin, 1984; Shuman, 1986). For the most part, however, the developmental literature has stressed how young writers' texts gain *freedom from*, as opposed to how young writers use texts to make connections with, the worlds surrounding those products (among the exceptions, Gundlach, McLane, Stott, & McNamee, 1985).

Yet, there is potential theoretical power to adding contextual depth to our examinations of young children's writing, that is, to considering not only how children organize textual worlds but also how they simultaneously manipulate the surrounding worlds. In the following sections, I consider the implications of this perspective for current questions about the developmental roles of narrative, non-narrative, and expressive writing.

Narrative versus Non-narrative Writing: Redrawing the Boundaries

First, a recent developmental issue has centered on whether or not young children's earliest writing is predominantly narrative. Although narratives are often assumed to be the earliest extended writing produced by young children (Perera, 1984), this is not necessarily the case, as illustrated by observations reported here and elsewhere (Sowers, 1979; Newkirk, 1987). However, *narrative's* opposite--*non-narrative*--seems to be used synonomously with *exposition*, with conveying information about the real world; and it is used antonymously with *story*.

In the currently reported project, the children's observed writing, though multifunctional, was predominantly playful and imaginative. Yet, their *written* imaginative texts were not necessarily narratives, even though all focal children spontaneously *told* narratives. Further, from the children's point of view, the essential writing issue did not appear to be whether to write a narrative or a non-narrative, but what sort of stance or role to adopt vis-a-vis--their relationship as authors to--the social, experienced, and symbolic worlds. For example, they wrestled with whether their text worlds were "real" or "not real" and--in a more sophisticated vein--with how to comfortably exist within a "might-be-even-if-it-isn't" world.

In open-ended tasks, such as the observed journal activity, children's early school writing may tend to be non-narrative, but that does not necessarily imply a relative absence of writing that is, at least in spirit, "story"--that is, of imaginary worlds. Both narrative and non-narrative forms figure into children's growth as creators of imaginative texts.

Thus, this project suggests that *narrative* and *non-narrative* may not be the most meaningful higher-level categories for investigating children's writing growth (for related views, see Rosen & Rosen, 1974, and Bissex, 1980). Rather than categories related to form, those related to children's purposes and to their stances may provide more insight.

Expressive Writing: From One Stance to Many

The issue of stance or role leads to a second developmental issue. This issue centers on Britton's concept of expressive writing, writing produced by the relaxed, conversational "speaker" (Britton, 1970; Britton, et al., 1975). Britton hypothesizes that such writing should be particularly helpful for young children. First, expressive writing allows children to draw on "the knowledge of words and structure . . . built up in speech," while gradually internalizing written language structures (Britton et al., 1975, p. 82). Second, expressive writing is "close to self," in part perhaps because it is a relatively undifferentiated genre and thus does not require writers to clothe their voices in formal structures; expressive writing, therefore, should allow children to

develop a "working relationship" between their language and their experiences (Britton, 1982, p. 97).

Since Britton first developed his theory, researchers have documented children's ability to write for a range of functions, many, like listing, decidedly unlike speech (e.g., Bissex, 1980; Dyson, 1983; Harste, Woodward, & Burke, 1984; Newkirk, 1987). Further, they have documented "oral" literacy (Scollon & Scollon, 1981; Tannen, 1982), and well-read (to) children are now viewed as developing written language registers much earlier than previously supposed (Purcell-Gates, 1986; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). These findings have led to a questioning of the developmental role of expressive writing (e.g., Bissex, 1980; Newkirk, 1987).

In the observed classroom, the focal students relied on talking and, also, drawing to develop their meanings. But they relied on written language as well as oral language features to render and develop their meanings in written text. Certain children, like Manuel, used primarily a written language register in his stories (see Dyson, 1987b). The role of expressive writing seems to be a variable one, dependent no doubt on the knowledge of oral and written language the child can and chooses to draw upon and the overriding function of the writing.

In addition, "expressive" writing may itself need refinement as a concept. Children's "undifferentiated" writing did not seem due only to an "expressive" or conversational stance. Rather the children's writing suggested a struggle with the multiple stances inherent in writing and, more specifically, in imaginative writing: the children could be observers or actors in the imaginary, the ongoing social, or the broader world--or even commentators on other symbolic forms.

One aspect of the expressive writing concept did figure clearly into the observed children's development as imaginative writers: the adoption of a stance "close to self." In varied ways, all four of the first/second grade children began synthesizing their varied roles as writers by making their stories "close to self," particularly by embodying themselves, their friends, and/or their experiences as elements within their imaginative worlds. Bringing writing "in close" appeared to be a powerful way of finding firmer ground upon which to act, feel, and move forward within the imaginative world, while maintaining connections with the ongoing social world, the wider experienced world, and their own renderings of experiences in other symbolic media.

In Britton's terms, the children were working out their relationship with experience through language. But there was more than one relationship involved. The observed children were finding how their relationships to others and to the wider world could be mediated through texts, working toward a clearer writing voice or, in Halliday's words, an integrated "personality--a role complex" (1978, p. 15). And, as suggested by Mitzi's last stories, the children will find this written self a "useful mask. . . . In the end, of course, the mask resembles our own faces, but with no need to say *I*" (Muschg, 1987, p. 28).

In Conclusion

This article has offered an interpretive frame for viewing school children's growth as creators of imaginative worlds, a frame that will need to be explored within the instructional contexts of other classrooms. Within this frame, children are viewed

as gradually differentiating the multiple social and symbolic worlds within which authors of imaginary prose create. Such a view of child writers suggests that writing development does not depend only on children's discovery of cognitive and linguistic strategies for creating coherent written texts. Rather, these strategies themselves may depend on children's discovery that writing can help authors create coherence in their worlds beyond the texts.

For, while I have focused on imaginative writing, the development of any use of written language no doubt involves the discovery of a stance--of "how one [who uses language in a particular way] is situated with respect to others and toward the world" (Bruner, 1986, p. 136). This complex process cannot be understood through focusing only on text worlds with beginnings, middles, and ends. For, if those text worlds are to figure into the lives of children, those worlds must offer children ways of understanding their own experiences and of connecting with others. That is, text worlds are suspended--embedded--within a web of multiple worlds.

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